

SUBJECT: Victor MARCHETTE (1)

Interview on New York City
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NOTE: Interviewer not identified but believed to be John B. Tucker.

TUCKER: When you think of the spy game you think of the glamorous life of James Bond. Behind the glamor someone runs the spy game - one of these organizations is the CIA. My next guest is Victor MARCHETTE, high ranking officer in the CIA, he was, left CIA after 14 years and he has just written a novel called the Rope Dancer which I will show you in a moment. How come you wanted to write a novel?

MARCHETTE: Well, recently I wanted to write a non-fiction book - it would have been a critical analysis of the CIA and the intelligence business but at the time I resigned after 14 years I was loaded up with loyalties to the Agency and my friends so I decided to do it this way and this book is very realistic - it will give the reader a feel for what life is like in an Agency like CIA; what the mentality of the officers are, what motivates them and what some of the hanky-panky is that goes on behind the scenes. Of course it is a good story.

TUCKER: I met two people from the CIA - you and a young girl who tried to recruit me when I was in the Army.

MARCHETTE: You probably met more people from the CIA only you didn't know it. If a fellow was presently overseas he cannot advertise to his friends that he is a CIA man he has to go and say he is with State Department or a business of some sort.

TUCKER: How do you get in the CIA? and were you as high ranking as I introduced you as being?

MARCHETTE: I think it would be a better phrase to say I was a highly placed official. I had been a rank equivalent of full Colonel when I left. The last few years I had been in the Executive Suite, executive assistant to the number two man in the Agency - then Admiral Rufus Taylor.

TUCKER: This was in Washington in the CIA Headquarters which is in Langley, Virginia - beautiful setting. Not too well disguised is it?

MARCHETTE: No. They make no attempt to disguise it. It is surrounded by trees - to get to the building one has to drive about a quarter of a mile off the main road. Everybody that lives there knows it is CIA.

TUCKER: Now you don't do recruiting do you?

MARCHETTE: No. I recruited a couple of people.

TUCKER: How do you decide you want that man for CIA?

MARCHETTE: There are two ways. One is recruiters in the field have been told in advance the kind of people the Agency needs at any point and time. They also know there is a general type of person who could be useful to the Agency. Take my case for example, I had been in military intelligence for a number of years and I had lived in Europe and then I came back to school and studied Russian civilization. One of the professors was probably a cleared consultant with the Agency or cleared contact and he fingered me. One day I got a phone call from somebody who said he was a friend of my brother's and could I meet him at a hotel and not ask the desk clerk but come right up to the room and it turned out that he was a recruiter for CIA. He asked me if I would like to work with them after finding out to his own satisfaction that I was patriotic and all that, they tested me, and I had some interviews and I was hired and I went to work for them. Then I went into training.

TUCKER: What did you do? What were some of the jobs you had with them?

MARCHETTE: Well, I spent some time in operations which is the romantic side of the business, but mostly I was in the intelligence analysis side of it. I did research - I did current intelligence - and I worked in the field of National Estimates. This is the highest form of intelligence where we sit down and try to answer questions. What is the status of the Soviet Strategic Strike System, what are the Soviets planning in the field of anti-Ballistic missile development?

TUCKER: Did you ever start any revolutions? Do they do that really?

MARCHETTE: No, not I. I think it is done - obviously some of them have been very highly advertised, such as the Guatemalan Revolution, the two in Iran, the Bay of Pigs.

TUCKER: How about Malaysia? Were you guys in on that?

MARCHETTE: They may have been, but not to my knowledge. Obviously deeply in Vietnam and in Laos they virtually have a private war going on in Laos. There are no US troops there but CIA is there in force; helping the Mao's to try to hold off the North Vietnamese and in the process of which, are destroying a lot of innocent people.

TUCKER: You quit, obviously.

MARCHETTE: Yes, I quit. This was just one item that was eating at me. I joined up in the days of the cold war and I was highly patriotic and I wanted to be in the first line of defense. However, as the times changed, great socio-political changes going on in the world - the Agency still lived as far as I could see, back in the 50's, and this is true of the intelligence unit in general. The military intelligence units as well. It began to eat at me - I got bothered and I was in a position where I could speak out and perhaps try to get some changes made and I thought maybe cut down the size of the Agency as well as the community - reduce the military influence which is tremendous. Actually most of the intelligence community is owned by the Pentagon.

TUCKER: It is?

MARCHETTE: Yes. About 85 per cent of the intelligence community is actually under the direct or indirect control of the Secretary of Defense. Mr. Holms, who runs the CIA, actually only controls about 15 per cent of the assets -- people and money. He controls the most romantic aspect of the business and also one of the most influential parts -- which is the intelligence unit.

TUCKER: About how much is the total CIA of the intelligence community?

MARCHETTE: About 15.

TUCKER: It is only 15?

MARCHETTE: For example the intelligence community costs the Government today -- depending on whose figures you go by -- about six billion dollars a year of which CIA only has about 15 per cent. That is a lot of money.

TUCKER: --and they still have this war going on in Laos -- with 15 per cent they do pretty well!

MARCHETTE: Well, with the little games that are played behind the scenes of course. A lot of the CIA expenditures for Laos and Vietnam are not charged off to their account, they are charged off to the military account.

TUCKER: I am sure it must have happened -- but I'm not sure -- you being a patriotic man I'll ask you -- does it ever bother you that they foment a war--

MARCHETTE: --not foment -- they make a war in Laos and they don't look and say that Congress will pass a war. It certainly does bother me. There are quite a few people who become very angry -- particularly the people who are on the analytical side, the intellectuals in the Agency, the people who are studying foreign nations and trying to determine trends. These people are bothered very much by it, however, that is only the tip of the iceberg -- the bulk of the iceberg is the

clandestine side of the Agency and these are the people who have the power to get involved in things like Laos. Now when the CIA - I shouldn't say the CIA - excuse me, when the United States went into Cambodia recently after a coup had occurred and the U. S. went into Cambodia, there was such a stir created within the CIA the Director actually had to call a meeting in the auditorium and speak, largely to the younger officers, and try to explain the facts of life to them.

TUCKER: In other words saying that our country has taken our war away from us. Was that what he was saying?

MARCHETTE: No. What he was saying is the President of the United States calls the shots and if the President of the United States orders the U. S. armed forces into Cambodia, as a good soldier you go into Cambodia, even though you may disagree and that in the CIA one cannot be political, he was telling them you may believe something personally and you are free to vote whichever way you want to but you cannot let that interfere with your work. In your work you have to be as objective as possible and you have to follow orders. This is how they get involved in coups for example, there is a very small section of the National Security Act of 1947 which says that CIA will do anything else that the National Security Council instructs them to do from time to time. Well, from time to time they may be instructed to cause some trouble somewhere - if they are it is their duty to do it and they will do it in a clandestine fashion, the best possible way they can.

TUCKER: We need more time to talk on this. Can we meet again?

MARCHETTE: I would love to.